

9 December 2014

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Dear Ann

Thank you for your petition and supporting documentation presented to council on 1 October and 3 November respectively, my sincere apologies for the delayed response, there was some slight confusion caused by a separate petition which also concerned the future of Tolson Museum.

As you will be aware the future of Tolson Museum is part of a wider decision about the council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. This is out for consultation at the moment, and there is a specific question in the consultation about alternative options for running our museums, art galleries and historic houses.

This consultation ended on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014. I have ensured that your petition is included in the report of the consultation findings which will go to the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

Councillors have the overall responsibility for making final budget decisions. The final budget will be set at the Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

In the meantime a number of points of clarification would be helpful

#### Role of the Friends Group

While I appreciate as a Friends Group you have commenced and been successful in raising funds to support the Museum and Park, could you please explain if it is the intention or desire that the Friends Group to assume the management and responsibility of the Museum in full, or continue in a supporting role?

#### Funding and Surveys

Obviously while the Council moves through this period of financial difficulty all but essential spending on buildings has been suspended, and this includes that for building surveys.

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## **Tolson Museum**

While I appreciate the current asset information is now quite old (being from 2009) as that information indicated almost £1m in maintenance, it is likely to be even higher now, and hence, unless a commitment approaching this level of funding is available I would question whether a new survey is of use at this time. My concern being that while new information would be of use now, by the time a significant amount of money was raised the information would be out of date again.

The cost of such a survey is approximately £3800, would the group be willing to fund this figure?

It would be of great use to officers and members in reviewing services and property to understand where Voluntary groups such as the Friends of Tolson and Ravensknowle are willing to support and take responsibility for functions currently carried out by the Council and so I would welcome your thoughts on the above

Yours sincerely

**MARK GREGORY**

Head of Corporate Landlord